DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 450 930 PS 029 272

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TITLE	The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning.
ISBN	ISBN-0-8070-4218-8
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	119p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Beacon Press, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108-2892; Tel: 617-742-2110; Fax: 617-742-2290; Web site: http://www.beacon.org ($18).
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Academic Standards; Change Strategies; Educational Attitudes; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Environment; *Homework; Low Income Groups; *Parent Attitudes; *Parent Student Relationship; Parent Teacher Cooperation; Social Change; Social Class; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Historical Background

ABSTRACT

Arguing that the burden of homework causes significant family stress--including parent-child conflict, reduced family leisure time, and overly tired children--this book questions whether the benefits of homework are worth its costs. The book examines the historical progression of homework and the influence of international competition on the trend toward increasing homework assignments. While there is little evidence that excessive homework sharpens skills or leads to a competitive edge in the global market place, the book notes evidence that homework does broaden class divides, as children in families with fewer resources struggle to keep up. The book concludes by offering simple strategies for parents to "trust their instincts" and work to reduce the demands of homework. Following the introduction providing a rationale for this discussion, the chapters of the book are as follows: (1) "The Kitchen Table," setting out the myths of homework and illustrating its impact on family life in countless homes across the country; (2) "Does Homework Work?"; (3) "Homework in Historical Perspective"; (4) "Kids and Homework"; (5) "Homework and the Level Playing Field"; (6) "Homework in the Global Economy"; and (7) "What's a Mother--and a Neighborhood, and a Nation--to Do?" Contains extensive notes organized by chapter. (HTH)

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